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1703

RETURN OF DEAD TO THE U.S.

A 28-man U.S. Graves Registration Team has been in Jonestown since early this morning. They have had the full cooperation of the Guyanese Government in preparing the dead for return to the U.S.

Shipment of bodies from Jonestown to Georgetown, about 120 miles away, will be by helicopter, and may begin late this afternoon. The bodies will then be taken from the Guyanese capital to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for processing.

Three HH-53 helicopters are due in Georgetown from the U.S. at about 1:00 p.m. EST today. These aircraft, with a capacity of 22 litters and a cruising speed of about 120 miles per hour, will begin the job of ferrying the bodies back to Georgetown this afternoon. Rested crews are standing by in Georgetown to begin the operation.

C-141 aircraft are scheduled to begin arriving in Georgetown from the U.S. late this afternoon to start the airlift of bodies to Dover. We expect to have all bodies out of Guyana within the next 36-48 hours.

EXEMPT [illegible]
PA or FOI [illegible]

There are currently between 200 and 250 military personnel in Guyana.

The Department has been informed that 174 bodies have thus far been identified. The work of identification will continue at Dover AFB.

We have notified next of kin when known and will continue to do so as bodies are identified and next of kin located.

A word on the shipment of bodies: they are being placed in rubberized bags at Jonestown and will be put in rigid body transfer cases at Georgetown.

ARA:WDiedrich